

STATE BOARD MEETING DATE: September 25, 2006

SUBJECT: Consideration of Case No. C-2005-169 R, Joseph Lawson

SUBMITTED BY: Rachell L. Tucker, Chief Investigator, Investigative Unit, State Board of Education

MANAGEMENT TEAM REVIEW: September 7, 2006

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Joseph Lawson holds a Substitute teaching certificate valid April 7, 2003 until December 15, 2009.

On October 29, 2004, the Investigative Unit received a faxed report from the Albuquerque Police Department that contained charges alleging Mr. Lawson had committed attempted criminal sexual penetration, criminal sexual contact and criminal sexual contact of a minor. The alleged victim, Mr. Lawson's step-daughter, was a high-school student at the time that the allegations surfaced.

The Police audio-taped the interview with both Mr. Lawson and the interview with the victim. The victim opted not to prosecute at the time, so the case was dropped. On 4-19-05, the Investigative Unit followed-up and conducted its own recorded interviews of both Mr. Lawson and the alleged victim. During the interview with Mr. Lawson, he admitted that some sexual conduct occurred with his step-daughter, but he asserted that it was a singular occurrence, it was mutual, and she was 18 at the time. The victim portrayed that it was not singular, but was a molestation that was forced upon her, and he had committed other acts earlier in her life, between 1991 and 1995.

Prior to the completion of the investigative process, Mr. Lawson submitted an application for an Emergency Teaching Certificate to work in Red Mesa Unified School District. Despite proper notification, Mr. Lawson did not reply to requests for additional information, and did not attend the meeting of the Professional Practices Advisory Committee (PPAC).

The PPAC held a review hearing on August 23, 2006. After reviewing the file, considering the Investigative Unit's summary of Mr. Lawson's interview, and listening to the victim's tape-recorded interview conducted by the Investigative Unit, the PPAC concluded that Mr. Lawson engaged in immoral and unprofessional conduct, which makes him unfit to teach and has an adverse effect on or within the school community based on the following:

The PPAC found that Mr. Lawson's willful refusal to provide information which is essential to provide his defense and the inherent seriousness of the offenses are aggravating factors.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: ☐ INFORMATION ☒ ACTION/DESCRIBED BELOW

That the Board accept the findings of fact, conclusions of law and recommendation of the PPAC and deny Joseph Lawson's application for certification.

ATTACHMENTS: YES ☒ NO ☐